

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PANAMA 04475 221408Z

ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-02 CIAE-00 MCT-01 HA-05 AID-05

CCO-00 FBOE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSC-05

SP-02 OC-06 OPR-02 PA-01 USSS-00 CA-01 A-01

SCS-06 OMB-01 SS-15 SY-05 /092 W

-----020142 221513Z /75

R 221358Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7638

INFO PANCANAL

USSOUTHCOM

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 04475

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PBOR, ASEC, PN

SUBJECT: SCHOOL'S STILL OUT

REF: PANAMA 4259

SUMMARY: THE UNIVERSITY OF PANAMA REMAINS CLOSED FOR AN "INDEFINITE PERIOD", AND THE SITUATION THERE IS "UNDER STUDY", ACCORDING TO A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY THE EDUCATION MINISTER AND THE UNIVERSITY RECTOR. TWO STUDENTS FROM RIVAL FACTIONS WHO WERE KILLED IN CAMPUS VIOLENCE LAST WEEK WERE BURIED ON JUNE 19 AND 20, EACH FUNERAL ATTENDED BY SEVERAL HUNDRED MOURNERS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE PRECISE COURSE OF EVENTS RESULTING IN THE DEATH OF TWO STUDENTS ON THE UNIVERSITY OF PANAMA (UP) CAMPUS JUNE 14 IS STILL NOT COMPLETELY CLEAR. HOWEVER, THE CONSENSUS SEEMS TO BE THE FOLLOWING: A MEETING WAS BEING CONDUCTED BY THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST UNIVERSITY FRONT (FAU, AFFILIATED WITH THE PANAMANIAN COMMUNIST PARTY) TO DISCUSS PARTICIPATION IN THE WELCOME CEREMONIES FOR PRESIDENT CARTER. STUDENTS FROM RIVAL ULTRA-LEFTIST GROUPS -- E.G., THE GUAYKUCHO, REVOLUTIONARY STUDENT FRONT (FER), AND
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PANAMA 04475 221408Z

CAMILO TORRES CIRCLE (CCT) -- WHO OPPOSED CARTER'S VISIT DISRUPTED THE MEETING AND PROVOKED VIOLENCE. THE FAU SOUGHT SUPPORT FROM FEP (FEDERATION OF PANAMANIAN STUDENTS) STUDENTS WHO WERE IN A MEETING NEARBY, ULTIMATELY OUTNUMBERING AND ROUTING THE ULTRA-LEFTISTS. THE FIGHTING EVIDENTLY ESCALATED RAPIDLY FROM NAME-CALLING AND STONE-THROWING TO SHOOTING AND THE TOSsing OF

MOLOTOV COCKTAILS. DAMAGE WAS DONE TO SEVERAL UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS. SEVERAL HUNDRED STUDENTS MAY HAVE BEEN ON CAMPUS AS THE VIOLENCE BROKE OUT, BUT THE NUMBERS INVOLVED PROBABLY DIMINISHED TO A CORE OF ABOUT 50.

2. THE TWO STUDENTS KILLED IN THE BRAWL WERE DEMOSTENES RODRIGUEZ ALVAREZ, 20, OF THE FAU, AND JORGE CAMACHO, 21, OF THE FER. THERE HAVE BEEN RUMORS OF ONE OR TWO MORE DEATHS. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO EDUCATION MINISTER ROYO'S JUNE 15 PRESS STATEMENT AND A JUNE 20 COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY ROYO AND UP RECTOR SALAS, THERE WERE TWO DEATHS, TWO SERIOUS INJURIES, AND 11 OTHER STUDENTS WHO SUFFERED MINOR INJURIES.

3. CAMACHO WAS BURIED JUNE 19, AND RODRIGUEZ JUNE 20. EACH FUNERAL WAS ATTENDED BY SEVERAL HUNDRED MOURNERS, BUT APPARENTLY NO UNTOWARD EVENTS OCCURRED.

4. IN THEIR JUNE 20 COMMUNIQUE, ROYO AND SALAS REITERATED THE FACT THAT UP ACTIVITIES WERE SUSPENDED "INDEFINITELY". THOUGH THEY STATED THAT THE SITUATION WAS "INTOLERABLE" AND THAT MEANS FOR RESTORING NORMALCY WERE UNDER STUDY, THEY GAVE NO INDICATION OF WHEN THE UNIVERSITY WOULD REOPEN. THERE HAS BEEN SPECULATION THAT IT MIGHT NOT DO SO UNTIL THE BEGINNING OF THE SECOND SEMESTER IN AUGUST. THE COMMUNIQUE REPORTED THAT THE UP'S ACADEMIC COUNCIL AND GOVERNING COUNCIL WOULD STUDY THE STRUCTURE AND REGU-
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PANAMA 04475 221408Z

LATION OF STUDENT POLITICAL ACTIVITY, THE GOVERNING MECHANISMS OF THE VARIOUS SCHOOLS WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY, AND THE UNIVERSITY'S ECONOMIC SITUATION. AS TO THE ACTUAL DISTURBANCES, THOSE FOUND RESPONSIBLE WOULD BE EXPELLED FROM THE UNIVERSITY AND LEFT TO THE DISPOSITION OF THE JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES.

5. COMMENT: TENSION BETWEEN RIVAL STUDENT FACTIONS -- THE BASICALLY PRO-GOVERNMENT, PRO-TORRIJOS, PRO-TREATY GROUPS, AND THE "ANTI'S" -- IS HARDLY NEW. IN ROYO'S WORDS, THE PROSPECT OF THE TREATY RATIFICATION CEREMONY WAS THE LAST DROP OF WATER THAT "CAUSED THE CUP TO OVERFLOW." STILL, THE UP COMMUNITY AND THE POPULACE IN GENERAL SEEM TO HAVE BEEN GENUINELY SHOCKED BY THIS VIOLENCE, AND THERE IS SOME FEAR OF RENEWED VIOLENCE IF THE RIVALS TRY TO EVEN UP THE SCORES. THE NATIONAL GUARD'S REFUSAL TO ENTER THE UP CAMPUS WAS POLITICALLY WISE. IF A CREDIBLE CHARGE COULD BE MADE THAT THE GUARD HAD KILLED THE STUDENTS, A MARTYR MIGHT HAVE BEEN CREATED, WITH UNPREDICTABLE CONSEQUENCES FOR POLITICAL STABILITY. AS IT IS, MOST PANAMANIAN'S SEE THE DEATHS AS A RESULT OF INTERNECINE STUDENT FEUDING. WE DO NOT

EXPECT THE UP TO REOPEN ANY TIME SOON -- IN ALL LIKELI-
HOOD IT WON'T BE UNTIL THE SECOND SEMESTER BEGINS IN
AUGUST. MOORE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PROAMERICAN, ANTIAMERICAN FEELING, CIVIL DISORDERS, UNIVERSITIES, DEATHS, STUDENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PANAMA04475
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780260-0971
Format: TEL
From: PANAMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780630/aaaabadh.tel
Line Count: 119
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 6990bf83-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 PANAMA 4259
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2247639
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SCHOOL'S STILL OUT
TAGS: PINS, PBOR, ASEC, PROP, SCUL, PN, REVOLUTIONARY STUDENT FRONT, FER, ANTI-IMPERIALIST UNIVERSITY FRONT, FAU
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/6990bf83-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014